ENTERTAINMENT

Page 2 – Los Lonely Boys perform in Pontiac, Michigan

EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS

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COMMUNITY

Pages 8-9 - Detroit Filmmaker Diego Cruz

Para Ganarse a Taylor, La Jali Agregó Tex-Mex a Su Menú

Por Michael D. Gutierrez

José "Pichón" Vargas pasó cuatro semanas perfeccionando un emparedado mexicano que nunca había escuchado nombrar… hasta que un técnico del cable se lo pidió. No era una torta. Esas sí las conocía. El cliente quería algo por capas. Empezar con tortilla, luego frijoles, luego queso, luego carne. Y repetir. "¿Como una lasaña mexicana?", preguntó Pichón. El técnico asintió.

"La Jali" abrió su nuevo local en Taylor el viernes 8 de noviembre, en el 9411 de Telegraph Road (entre Wick y Goddard Roads), apenas unas semanas después de aquella conversación con el técnico del cable. Del techo cuelga papel picado de colores, y el menú va desde platillos tradicionales de Jalisco como la birria, los sopes, los huaraches, la quesabirria, y sí, hasta algo de Tex-Mex.

En el restaurante familiar de Southwest Detroit, el chef ejecutivo de 25 años se había hecho de nombre rechazando por completo la comida Tex-Mex. Pero Taylor pedía

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To Win Taylor, La Jali Adds Tex-Mex To Its Menu

By Michael D. Gutierrez | Photos by Juan Carlos Dueweke-Pérez for Featherstone

Vargas Family Members Leslie Vargas (Operations Manager), José "Pichón" Vargas (Executive Chef), Matriarch Tere Lopez, Juan Vargas (Market Manager) pictured behind his father, Jose Manuel Vargas, and Nicolas Vargas with Mexican Consul Roberto Nicolas Vazquez and Taylor Mayor Tim Wooley.

José "Pichón" Vargas spent four weeks perfecting a Mexican sandwich he'd never heard of until a cable guy asked for it. Not a torta. Those he knew. The customer wanted layers. Start with tortilla, add beans, add cheese, add meat. Repeat. "Like a Mexican lasagna?" Pichón asked. The cable guy nodded.

"La Jali" opened its Taylor location on Friday, November 8, at 9411 Telegraph Road (between Wick and Goddard Roads), weeks after that cable guy conversation. Colorful papel picado decorates the ceiling, and the menu runs from traditional Jalisco dishes like birria, sopes, huaraches, quesabirria, and yes, even Tex-Mex.

At the family's Southwest Detroit restaurant, the 25-year-old executive chef built his reputation by refusing Tex-Mex entirely. But Taylor wanted enchiladas and that sandwich thing. Taylor, five minutes from where the Vargas family lives but worlds away from the Southwest customer base that kept them busy for four years, wanted something familiar. So he adapted.

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Detroit Elections Results:

Mary Sheffield Makes History

By Annalise Frank for Axios Detroit – Reprinted with permission

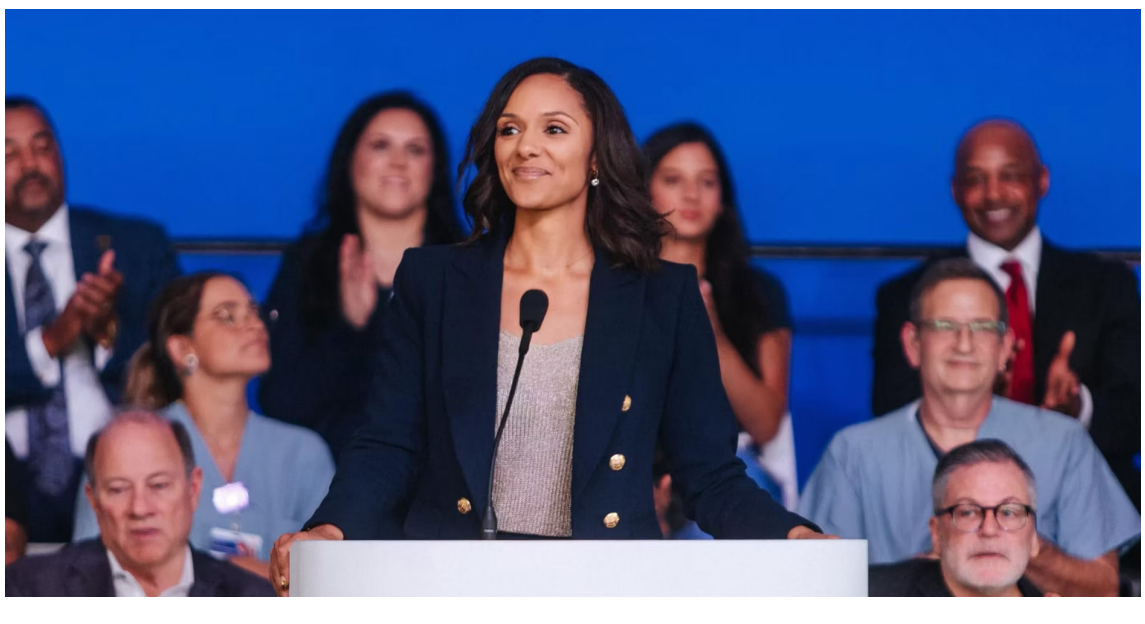
City Council President Mary Sheffield was elected on Tuesday, November 4 as Dedtroit's first woman mayor.

Why it matters: Sheffield will bring 12 years of City Council experience to the executive seat in January.

- She also returns a supermajority-Black American city to Black leadership for the first time since its bankruptcy ended.

The latest: Sheffield replaces three-term Mayor Mike Duggan, who opted not to seek another term and is running for governor.

- She bested rival the Rev. Solomon Kinloch Jr. of Detroit-based Triumph Church in a landslide victory, with Sheffield receiving 77% of the vote to Kinloch›s 22% amid 22% voter turnout, per unofficial results with all precincts reported.



What they're saying: "I feel like today was a mandate by the residents of our city that experienced leadership is important, that there has been progress in our city but we've got to do more," Sheffield told reporters last night.

- Later, she told a packed audience in the casino's grand ballroom: "I say to every little girl watching tonight, and to every child in this city: Never doubt yourself … No mountain is too high for you to climb."

State of play: Sheffield, with a progressive history and big-time corporate support, will have an even bigger pulpit to show Detroiters her leadership style following four years as council president.

- As she focuses on campaign goals such as improving education and ensuring livable wages, she'll face major challenges like budget constraints, potentially fewer federal dollars and constrained nonprofit partners.

By the numbers: Sheffield joins eight Black female mayors of the 100 most populous U.S. cities as of June, per the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP).

- Thirty-seven of those 100 cities were governed by women.

Of those women, Sheffield will become one of, if not the youngest, at 38.

- CAWP doesn't officially track mayors' ages, but couldn't confirm any others under 40 to Axios.

Data: Center for American Women and Politics; Chart: Jacque Schrag/Axios

More and more younger women are running for office, CAWP associate director Jean Sinzdak tells Axios.

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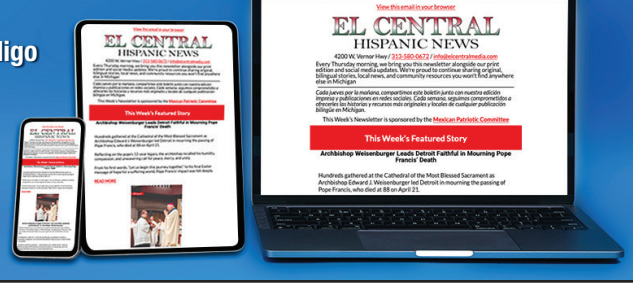

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The Lonely Boys in Michigan:
Pontiac vibrated to the rhythm of Texican rock & roll

Story and photos by Erick Diaz Veliz

"Inspiration comes from existence, from the life that we have," said Ringo Garza just a few minutes before going on stage, while he tapped his drumsticks on his chair as if it was a drum. His two brothers, Jojo and Henry, were getting ready around him. Meanwhile, outside the dressing room at the Flagstar Strand Theatre, hundreds began to gather for Los Lonely Boys' return to Michigan.

On Friday night, July 7, Grammy Award winners Los Lonely Boys (LLB) had hundreds of fans dancing and rocking in Pontiac as part of their nationwide tour. The Flagstar Strand Theatre seats went unused as fans swayed and danced to the Texican rock & roll sound of the trio band from San Angelo, Texas. "Texican rock and roll" is a term coined by the band to describe their unique musical style, which blends rock and roll, Texas blues, and Tejano.

"Just the life that we have, brother. That's an inspiration, along with the family that we have," added Henry, guitarist and vocalist of LLB, while reminiscing about the more than twenty years of the band's musical career. Los Lonely Boys, formed by the three Garza brothers in 1996, returned to the stage in summer 2022 after a break of almost three years.

The opening blues-rock band, Mark Kassa and Slight Return, had left the audience hyped and ready for the headliners. Henry was the first to take the stage, followed by his brothers. Amidst shouts and whistles, he grabbed the microphone, and a simple and loud "Hola, Michigan!" was enough to send the crowd into a frenzy of applause and cheers, which were quickly silenced by "Rockpango," the first song of the night.

Although there are about 1,400 miles of distance between Pontiac and San Angelo, the trio feels no difference in the audiences despite the hundreds of miles. "They're good folks, good people; they're good fans, whether it's here in Michigan or Texas. They always make us feel at home," said Henry.

Among the crowd was Javir Aleman, a Pontiac resident, who came with his brothers to see the show. "Our father was born in Texas, and we've listened to them ever since they first came out. We're a trio of brothers also, just as they are," said Aleman. "The show was awesome. It was everything I expected and more."

Michigan is no stranger to the cultural influence of the Texan and Mexican communities; waves of labor migration from the southern states and Mexico left their mark on cities and towns across this region of the Midwest, creating cultural influences that still exist in music, art, and food.

The band Los Primos, founded in Detroit by Martin Solis in the late 40s, stands out as a pillar of Tex-Mex music in Michigan. Solis was the first Michigan musician inducted into the Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame and the Tejano R.O.O.T.S. Hall of Fame.

Additionally, On the intersection of 21st and Bagley Streets in Southwest Detroit, a marker honoring the legacy of Tejano music in the city was unveiled in 2023, where Solis is remembered along with other Tejano artists from Michigan.

Frank Solis, president and co-founder of the Martin H. Solis Jr. Tejano Association, explained that Texan music influences made his way from the southern states to other cities by the hand of artist like Tony de la Rosa, Oscar Hernandez, Cha Cha Jimenez, Los Chachos, among others. "It evolved from the 30s with the likes of Narcizo Martinez and his conjunto," Solis said.

"Through the 80s and early 2000s, the Tex-Mex scene turned into a major music industry across the country, having Selena Quintanilla as its most important picture," Solis highlighted. "Also, many artists from big Midwest cities, Chicago and Detroit, started to pop up and find spaces in the industry as many records started to appear as well."

"We know there is Chicano and Tejano music around here, and although we go more into rock and roll, we'd like to hear more about them," said Henry, who also encouraged the Tejan and Mexican community to keep going forward. "Thanks for everything and pa´ adelante," he finished.

The show had reached its end; Henry walked off the stage after dropping his guitar picks and JoJo, bass and voice, were thanking their fans for coming to the show. From the crowd, their voices were intensely shouting "Heaven" one of the band's greatest hits. They wanted more.

Without more comments, Los Lonely Boys pleased their fans with the last song of the night. Having everyone singing and dancing "Heaven", it marked on them an unforgettable night in Pontiac, Michigan.

Erick Diaz Veliz is a Peruvian reporter based in Lansing, Michigan. He has documents and reports on cultural, social, and political issues in Peru and Michigan as a freelancer. Erick was born in Lima, Peru, and has been living in Lansing since 2018.

This article and photos were made possible thanks to a generous grant to EL CENTRAL Hispanic News by Press Forward, the national movement to strengthen communities by reinvigorating local news. Learn more at www.pressforward.news.

Mark Kassa and Slight Return, a Detroit-based band opening for Los Lonely Boys at the Flagstar Strand Theatre in Pontiac, Michigan, on Friday, November 7.

Ringo Garza, drums in Los Lonely Boys.

Jojo Garza, bass and voice in Los Lonely Boys.

Henry Garza, guitar and voice in Los Lonely Boys.

CULTURA y Comunidad

CULTURE & COMMUNITY

No. 6

EDITED BY MICHAEL D. GUTIERREZ

Sound Check

Music from the local and global stage

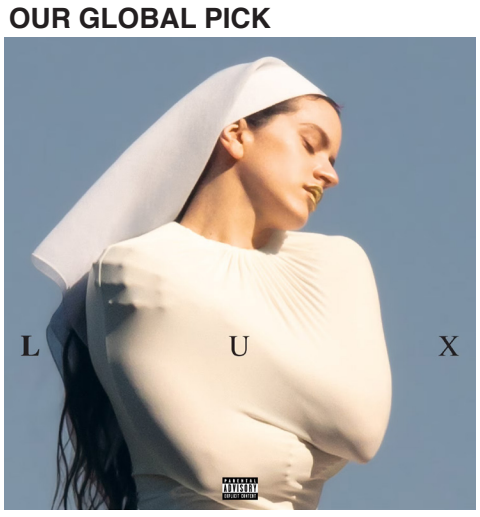
OUR LOCAL PICK

Track_____TRUST1
Artist____DEMACIIIO, FRANCO EAST
IG_____@demaciiio, @eastfranco

Southwest's own Demaciiio goes bar-for-bar with Franco East on Trust1, a raw 2-minute-17-second statement of self-belief and wordplay in a soul-sampled, hauntingly repetitive piano-driven soundscape.

Demaciiio se enfrenta verso por verso con Franco East en Trust1, una declaración cruda de 2 minutos y 17 segundos que combina autoconfianza y juegos de palabras sobre un paisaje sonoro de soul samples, piano hipnótico y repetitivo.

OUR GLOBAL PICK



Track_____RELIQUIA
Artist_____ROSALIA
IG_____@rosalia.vt

Reliquia finds Rosalía naming cities across the globe over a trap-orchestral fusion—deep bass pulsing under sweeping strings in a meditative, lingering haze.

Reliquia muestra a Rosalía nombrando ciudades del mundo sobre una fusión de trap y orquesta, con un bajo profundo que palpita bajo cuerdas envolventes.

Hecho en Detroit

Art built by the city that builds

Standing proudly in the lobby of Taquería Mi Pueblo, Trago is a towering alebrije crafted by artist Ricardo Linares García of Mexico City, descendant of the legendary Linares family who first brought these fantastical creatures to life. The piece fuses the crest and front legs of a axoltín, the hind legs of a jaguar and a bear, the head of an eagle, and the wings and tail of a dragon.

Erguido con orgullo en el vestíbulo de Taquería Mi Pueblo, Trago es un imponente alebrije creado por el artista Ricardo Linares García, originario de la Ciudad de México y descendiente de la legendaria familia Linares, pionera de estas criaturas fantásticas. La pieza combina la cresta y patas delanteras de axoltín, las patas traseras de jaguar y oso, la cabeza de águila, y las alas y cola de dragón.

Sculpture_____Trago
Artist_____Ricardo Linares García
Location_____Taquería Mi Pueblo 7278 Dix St, Detroit

Photo credit: Michael D. Gutierrez

SW Sazón

One dish, one spot, puro sabor

Submitted by: Angela Gallegos (@angelacgallegos)

Who doesn't love a good roasted chicken? My friends and I stopped by after work and shared a chicken dinner! Mexican and Dominican flavors, made straight from the heart. We're happy to put everyone else on, go check it out!

¿A quién no le encanta un buen pollo rostizado? Mis amigos y yo pasamos después del trabajo y compartimos una cena de pollo. Sabores mexicanos y dominicanos, hechos con el corazón. ¡Nos alegra poder recomendarlo, vayan a probarlo!

Menu Item_____Roasted Chicken Dinner
Food Truck_____FOODTROPOLIS
Address_____3260 Junction, Detroit, MI 48210
Price_____$15 to $20

Got a favorite dish, drink, or hidden gem in Southwest Detroit? Put us on! Scan the QR code at the bottom of the page to submit your recommendation.

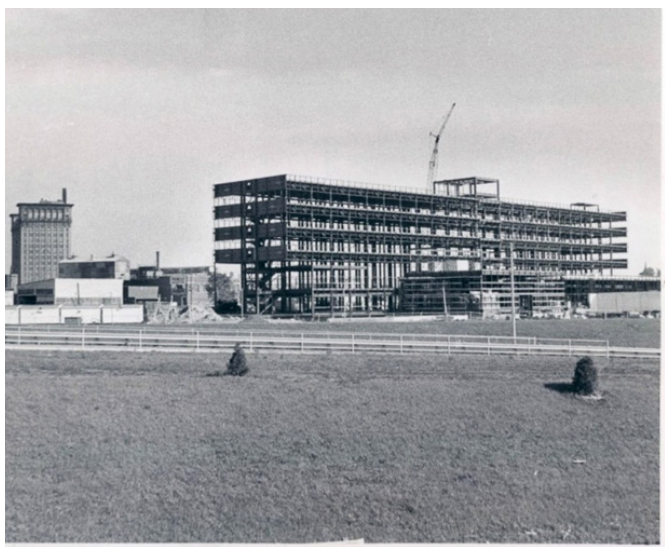
Throwback Thursday

Snapshots of our roots

Southwest Detroit Hospital (1972)

Before it became the future site of Detroit City FC's new stadium, this corner of Michigan Avenue and 20th Street was home to Southwest Detroit Hospital, opened in 1974 through the merger of four minority hospitals. Serving more than 200,000 Black, Arab, and Hispanic residents, it was among the first in Detroit to accredit Black doctors and nurses.

Antes de ser el futuro terreno del nuevo estadio de Detroit City FC, esta esquina de Michigan Avenue y la Calle 20 albergaba el Southwest Detroit Hospital, inaugurado en 1974 tras la fusión de cuatro hospitales minoritarios. Atendió a más de 200 000 residentes afroamericanos, árabes e hispanos, y fue de los primeros en Detroit en acreditar a médicos y enfermeras afroamericanos.



Credit: DetroitUrbex.com

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Miguel Rodriguez Named to Lead Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation

The Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC) has announced the appointment of Miguel Rodriguez as its new Executive Director, following a comprehensive six-month national search led by DHDC's Board of Directors. Rodriguez, a veteran organizer and international development leader, brings over two decades of experience in grassroots power building, youth leadership, and social impact. His career has spanned community empowerment in East Los Angeles, solidarity work with Indigenous communities in Mexico, recovery efforts in New Orleans, and leadership roles with Michigan-based and global nonprofits.

This leadership transition marks a significant new chapter in DHDC's ongoing commitment to education, opportunity, and civic engagement for the Southwest Detroit community. After engaging with community members, staff, funders, and community partners, the Board selected Rodriguez to lead the organization into its next era of growth, innovation, and community-centered transformation.

"Our search process was intentionally collaborative and rooted in community input," said Joaquin Nuño-Whelan, Board Chair of DHDC. "Miguel's experience, values, and vision align beautifully with DHDC's mission and the legacy built over decades. We are excited to welcome him as our next Executive Director."

The national search included listening sessions with community stakeholders, targeted outreach to local networks, and a review of highly qualified candidates nationwide—including local leaders—to ensure a strong and diverse pool. DHDC partnered with a nationally recognized leadership consultancy and an executive search firm specializing in mission-driven organizations to ensure a robust and participatory process.

Under the visionary leadership of Angie Reyes, DHDC has become a cornerstone for development in Southwest Detroit, creating pathways to education, employment, and safety for thousands of youth and families. For decades, Angie has been a tireless advocate for fair access, opportunity and community well-being—especially for communities whose voices are too often overlooked. Her unwavering commitment to community voice and her ability to unite stakeholders across sectors have made her a transformative force in shaping a more just and vibrant Detroit.

"Angie Reyes built DHDC from the ground up with passion, courage, and an unwavering belief in the power of community," said Joaquin Nuño-Whelan. "Her incredible leadership and execution have shaped DHDC into a nationally recognized model for grassroots empowerment. We are profoundly grateful for her decades of service and the legacy she continues to inspire. Her legacy will continue to impact our communities for generations to come."

The Board also recognized Lex Zavala for his many years of leadership and steadfast support during this transition, ensuring stability and continuity throughout the search process. His contributions helped guide the organization for over two decades and have left a lasting mark on DHDC and the greater Detroit community.

A Lifetime of Community Leadership

Descended from a family of Mexican agricultural workers who migrated to the United States seven decades ago, Miguel Rodriguez was born and raised in unincorporated East Los Angeles—a community deeply rooted in activism. His organizing journey began in the mid-1990s as he joined other youth advocating for quality education throughout California's university system, sparking a lifelong commitment to civic engagement.

As a young adult, Rodriguez moved to Chiapas, Mexico, where he co-founded a grassroots collective that built solidarity between organizers and Indigenous Mayan communities. His initiatives supported Indigenous autonomy and brought infrastructure improvements in clean water, health, and education. Later, in New Orleans, Rodriguez worked with Civil Rights leaders to organize multiracial, working-class community forums—laying the groundwork for early recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina.

Upon returning to East Los Angeles, Rodriguez led transformative programs in youth leadership, green construction, and community development—efforts that became models for sustainable, community-led change. Over the next decade, he expanded his work internationally, supporting more than fifty communities across Latin America and the Caribbean in economic mobility, civic engagement, juvenile reentry, violence prevention, and infrastructure building.

Miguel Rodriguez named to lead Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation

Rodriguez has also led cross-sector collaborations among philanthropic organizations, governments, and global institutions to expand opportunities in under-resourced communities. He is a contributing author of several influential resources, including A Comprehensive Field Guide for the Implementation of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Strategy—instrumental for local governments in Mexico addressing community-based violence—and Youth Pathways: A Workplace Based Training Blueprint—a framework for public and private sector institutions working together to combat youth unemployment in Costa Rica.

Before joining DHDC, Rodriguez served as Managing Director for a Michigan-based multiracial, working-class power-building organization and as Senior Director of Impact & Innovation for a global youth development organization. He holds a B.A. in International Development Studies from UCLA and is currently pursuing a Master's in Social Impact.

"DHDC stands as a beacon of community resilience, creativity, empowerment, and hope" said Rodriguez. "I am deeply honored to join this legacy—one built by Angie Reyes and generations of Detroit leaders—and to work alongside our youth, families, and partners, to build a future that reflects the needs, aspirations, and desires of Southwest Detroit residents, while honoring the rich history and traditions that make this community so extraordinary."

Detroit City Election Results

Continued from page 1

- Historically, many women have been constrained by childcare responsibilities, less flexible jobs and a lack of leadership roles.
- "Youth isn't something that's going to hold you back, at this point. It can be something really positive," Sinzdak says.

Context: "Detroit has been a city of history and they have done it once again," Mayor Van Johnson II of Savannah, Georgia, and president of the African American Mayors Association, told Axios.

- "I think it's important to make history, but it's also important to make sense. … This is not a gift, she earned this," Johnson said.

Zoom in: Sheffield is a native Detroiter who has "come up through the ranks, who has street credibility, someone who has served both in the community and on the council," said Johnson, whose association's membership is about one-third women.

- "I think that is the quint-essential American story," Johnson said. "She will be one little girls can look at and say, 'I can make this happen, because she made it happen.'"

Between the lines: Sheffield garnered support from a wide swath of Detroiters, outraising competitors and nabbing Duggan's endorsement.

- But she also spent the campaign's final days responding to media reports and Kinloch's accusations that she voted on city contracts worth millions for a demolition company whose CEO she was dating, as the Free Press chronicled.
- Sheffield has said she conferred with the city ethics board on the issue. She also cited a statement from corporation counsel Conrad Mallett asserting that council members are not subject to an executive order prohibiting personal relationships with contractors, according to the News.

New Faces to Join City Council

By Joe Guillen for Axios Detroit – Reprinted with permission

Detroit City Council will have two new members in 2026, giving the nine-member body some fresh perspectives as the city begins its next chapter.

Why it matters: The council provides checks and balances on the mayor's office and is responsible for voting on local ordinances, the annual city budget, contracts and land deals involving public property.

What's next: The new council will select its president and president pro-tem, the second-ranking member, early next year.

At-large: Mary Waters and Coleman Young II, both incumbents seeking their second terms, won the four-candidate race over former Council Member Janeé Ayers and Fire Department community relations chief James Harris.

District 1: Incumbent James Tate ran unopposed for his fifth term and could be the next council president.

District 2: Incumbent Angela Whitfield-Calloway won a rematch against former Council Member Roy McCalister Jr., 66%-33%.

District 3: Incumbent Scott Benson cruised to his fourth term over challenger Cranstana Anderson, 69%-30%.

District 4: Incumbent Latisha Johnson was unopposed for a second term.

District 5: UAW retiree Renata Miller prevailed against Police Commissioner Willie Burton, 56%-43%, to represent this closely watched downtown district.

District 6: Incumbent Gabriela Santiago-Romero defeated state Rep. Tyrone Carter, 63%-36%.

- Santiago-Romero rejected campaign donations this year from a PAC tied to billionaire businessman Dan Gilbert, per BridgeDetroit.

District 7: Denzel Anton McCampbell, who previously worked for U.S. Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Detroit), defeated veteran state Rep. Karen Whitsett (D-Detroit), 59%-40%.

Detroit Youth Assembly Inspires and Empowers Local Youth

By Juanita Zuniga

Detroit's Youth Assembly took place this past week, bringing together young leaders from across the city for an evening of engagement, learning, and civic dialogue. The event, organized by the City of Detroit's Youth Affairs team, aimed to empower youth voices and give participants tools to make an impact in their communities.

"One thing I'm taking from today's event is definitely to be a little more compassionate. While we see a lot of issues and instantly want to blame somebody, it's never really one person's fault. But if a lot of people can get together to work towards something, it can be fixed," said Cierra Gee, 17, from Jalen Rose Leadership Academy.

Gee who is also a youth activist and organizer reflected on the need for more youth-centered programming like this one—Detroit Youth Assembly, "While it may be seen as catered towards youth, only youth really know what they need. So definitely just focusing a little more on what is actually needed in the community," she said.

Valerie Brown, 17, senior at Western International High School, highlighted the need for year-round career opportunities for youth in tandem with programs like Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT) . "I'd like to see more internships and connections with law firms, nursing, doctors, and other career paths—not just during the summer," she said.

Shamere Duncan, Youth Affairs Engagement Coordinator, reflected on the event as a "full circle" experience.

"I came to the mayor's office at 19 during the Mayoral Fellowship program, and during that time, I learned a lot about what was happening in my neighborhood and behind the scenes of city government. To put together an event that would do that same thing for other young people…was a full circle moment," Duncan said.

She added that the assembly equips youth with critical information and resources for the future: "I think a lot of young people are walking away with so much information—information they need to store in the back of their brains so that when the time comes, they know about it."

Duncan also shared dreams for the Youth Affairs Department's future, including expanding the team to reach more young people citywide and continuing to prioritize youth voices in decision-making.

As students and community members left the assembly, there was a sense of purpose and determination. "The city is giving us opportunities to be heard, and we have to take them," Cierra Gee said.

The Detroit Youth Assembly, which is one of many events put on by the Department of Neighborhoods' Youth Affairs, continues to serve as a bridge between young people and city leadership, empowering Detroit's next generation to actively shape the future of their neighborhoods.

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Juanita Zuniga is a graduate of Kalamazoo College with degrees in Anthropology, Sociology, and English. She was born and raised in SW Detroit and still resides there today. She is passionate about her community and hopes to serve it through writing. In her spare time. Juanita is a Latin history and music enthusiast. She is also a Cancer Sun, Libra Moon, and Cancer Rising.

This article was made possible thanks to a generous grant to EL CENTRAL Hispanic News by Press Forward, the national movement to strengthen communities by reinvigorating local news. Learn more at www.pressforward.news.

Diles que lo Viste en *EL CENTRAL*

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City of Detroit Launches Interactive One-stop Map Of Food Pantries to Support SNAP Recipients

As part of the City of Detroit's SNAP interruption response, Mayor Mike Duggan recently announced the city website (DetroitMi.Gov) has gone live with an interactive map and listing of 85 verified food pantry locations. Additional sites will be added as they are verified and the team working on the city response expects the number to reach approximately 100 across the city.

Residents visiting the website will have the option to view the pantry location listing based on Council District or distance from any address in the city. Using the map view, visitors can click on any one of the dots to find out the address of the pantry, as well as its days and hours of operation.

People interested in volunteering can find the sign-up form on the front of the City of Detroit website at DetroitMi.Gov. The form lets volunteers sign up for one or more four-hour shifts, starting Wednesday, November 5.

Last week, the Trump administration said that SNAP recipients would receive 50% of their usual benefit in November, based on what they say is the amount of funding available in the SNAP reserve fund. It likely will still take days for those benefits to begin to reach SNAP recipients.

On Friday, November 7, the Mayor announced he has authorized $1.75 million in emergency funds to provide additional food to local pantries.

The Mayor's Department of Neighborhoods will be fully assigned to monitor the food pantry locations to determine if they need more volunteers or food. District Managers will be working closely with partners at the United Way and pantries to coordinate volunteer efforts.

The Mayor asked Detroiters to limit their visits to food banks to the same week of the month that their SNAP benefits usually appear on their cards.

"Each week, about a quarter of Detroiters who receive their SNAP benefits have them added to their card," the Mayor said. "If everyone sticks to that schedule, we can avoid long lines and better ensure ample food supply each week."

SNAP
Support for Detroiters
If you are impacted by the stoppage of SNAP food benefits, or if you want to help someone who is, here is what you can do.
1 FIND FOOD
To find one of the 90+ food bank locations in Detroit closest to you, visit the following websites:
Forgotten Harvest - forgottenharvest.org
Gleaners - gcfb.org
Metro Food Rescue - metrofoodrescue.com
2 GIVE
Make a financial donation of any size to any food bank.
What $25 buys at the grocery store
What a $25 food bank donation gets
Dollar Food
Whether or not you donate money, we welcome nonperishable food donations that are unexpired, undamaged, and unopened!
To donate food to Gleaners, visit: gcfb.org/food-drives
To donate food to Forgotten Harvest visit their warehouse at: 16900 W. Eight Mile Road Oak Park, MI 48237
Protein items are especially welcomed (i.e., canned tuna, canned salmon, and peanut butter)
3 VOLUNTEER
More hands makes the work easy. If you have time to give, offer to volunteer a shift at a local food bank.
To find a volunteer shift, connect with one of the organizations above to sign up.
4 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
If you are feeling overwhelmed by this or any other challenge and need emotional support:
Call United Way at 211
Contact the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network's 24-hour help line at 1-800-241-4949
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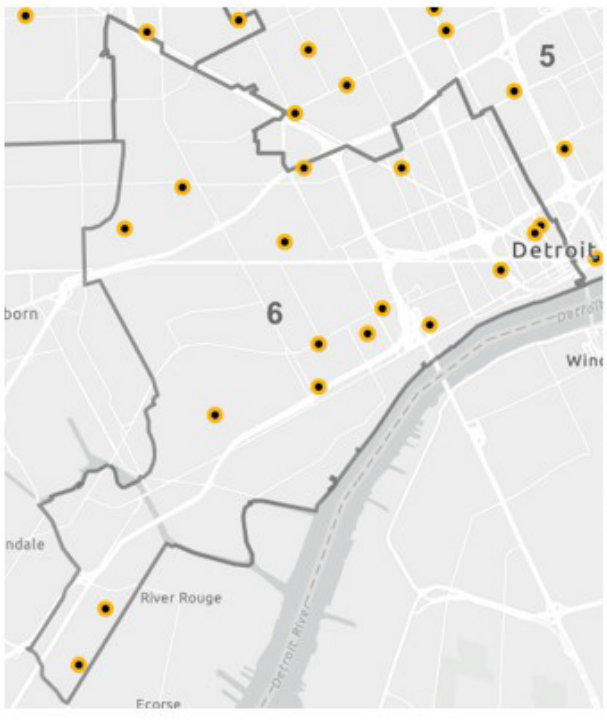

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La Jali Llega a Taylor

Con't de pg. 1

enchiladas… y ese "emparedado raro." Taylor, a solo cinco minutos de donde vive la familia Vargas pero a mundos de distancia del público que los sostuvo durante cuatro años, pedía algo más familiar. Así que se adaptaron.

"En Detroit yo decía: 'jamás voy a cambiar mi menú por Tex-Mex,'" cuenta Pichón. "Pero cuando me mudé acá, dije: 'necesitamos Tex-Mex. No hay manera de sobrevivir si no apuntamos a ese mercado.'"

La inauguración, que tuvo gran asistencia, contó con la presencia del alcalde de Taylor, Tim Wooley, quien participó en el corte de listón, y con representantes del Consulado de México en Detroit, incluyendo al cónsul Roberto Nicolás Vázquez y al agregado cultural Marlon Lara Porras.

La familia Vargas no tenía planeado expandirse. El dueño y patriarca, José Manuel Vargas, compró lo que su hija Leslie llama "un mercadito triste" en Southwest alrededor de 2016, después de pasar un año en Estados Unidos diciendo que ya estaba cansado de los negocios. Había manejado mercados en México durante 27 años, estableciéndose primero en la Ciudad de México antes de que la extorsión lo obligara a regresar hacia sus raíces en San Ignacio, Jalisco.

El restaurante de Detroit necesitaba una renovación total. José Manuel sabía cómo levantar negocios en crisis, su esposa Tere sabía cocinar, y Pichón acababa de graduarse de Schoolcraft College, donde aprendió técnicas francesas con chefs de alto nivel. La familia reconstruyó el menú, la operación y todo el negocio desde cero.

"Nos complementamos muy bien," dice Leslie. Tiene 23 años, está terminando la licenciatura en Recursos Humanos en Wayne State University mientras dirige la parte operativa. "Pero sí es difícil. La parte empresarial dentro de una familia siempre es dura."

Cuatro años después, ya tenían algo firme. Juan, de 20 años, se encargaba de las redes sociales y del mercado en Southwest Detroit, trayendo dulces y panes mexicanos que la gente no encontraba en ningún otro lado. Más de uno entraba y lloraba al ver productos que no veía desde hacía 18 años.

Entonces el antiguo dueño de Pancho's, en Telegraph Road, llamó a José Manuel. Estaba listo para jubilarse y tenía un local a la venta —a solo cinco minutos de su casa y ya equipado como restaurante mexicano. Compraron el lugar a finales de 2023 y pasaron año y medio entre permisos, construcción, equipo y contratación de personal. Firmaron los papeles y comenzaron a tirar paredes justo antes de que el Departamento de Policía de Taylor anunciara su cooperación total con Border Patrol en mayo.

"Cuando salió ese anuncio, ya estábamos bien metidos en todo esto," recuerda Leslie. Era demasiado tarde para echarse atrás, y ya habían invertido mucho. "Como negocio, tienes que aprender, adaptarte y superar esos retos."

El chef Pichón creció trabajando en todos los puestos de los negocios familiares. Apenas salió de la preparatoria, se inscribió en Schoolcraft, donde tienen cinco chefs certificados a nivel maestro. Tenía 18 años y ya estaba entrenando a cocineros con el doble de su edad. "Era algo serio," dice. "Necesitaba aprender más."

El menú de La Jali combina influencias de la Ciudad de México, Jalisco y Puebla. "Tradicional y aventurera," así describe Pichón su cocina. "Hay platillos donde me gusta experimentar… darles un giro distinto."

La familia vive en Taylor, pero en realidad nunca creció ahí porque pasaban todo su tiempo en el restaurante de Detroit. "Puedes conocer un área, pero no ser parte de ella," dice Leslie. "Eso se construye poco a poco."

Mexican Consul Roberto Nicolas Vazquez poses with Vargas Family Members Juan, Tere Lopez, Jose Manuel, Nicolas, Pichón, and Leslie.

Los clientes de Detroit pedían sopes sin tener que preguntar qué eran. Los de Taylor buscan enchiladas. Algunos reconocen La Jalisciense por su reputación en Southwest, mientras otros entran por casualidad desde Telegraph Road y, a mitad de su comida, se dan cuenta de que están comiendo algo que no encontrarían en ningún otro lugar cercano.

Juan Vargas nota que la parte del mercado en Southwest funciona distinto al restaurante. Desde el anuncio de cooperación con Border Patrol y el aumento de la presencia federal, la gente ha dejado de salir. "Sobrevivimos al COVID solo porque éramos una tienda de primera necesidad," dice Juan. "Pero ahora ni para lo básico están saliendo, y eso da miedo."

Los niños todavía entran a comprar los dulces que sus papás compraban antes. "Les preguntas: '¿y tu papá?' y te dicen: 'Está en casa. No ha salido en tres meses.'"

Pichón divide su tiempo entre las dos ubicaciones, entrenando al personal en Taylor y manteniendo a Southwest en marcha. Leslie maneja ambas como encargada de operaciones mientras termina la universidad. Incluso Nico, de 11 años, ayuda en lo que puede. Durante los años que ha tomado abrir el restaurante, Nico dice: "Usamos toda nuestra fuerza para lograrlo, y ahora que se ve el resultado, se siente bonito."

José Manuel ha abierto y rescatado varios negocios a lo largo de tres décadas, dos países y cinco ciudades. Sabe bien que los márgenes en la restauración son delgados y que duplicar locales también duplica los gastos sin asegurar el doble de ganancias. "Es trabajo muy duro, honesto, pero exige dedicación total," dice.

"Nunca pensamos que La Jalisciense en Detroit se convertiría en lo que es ahora," agrega Leslie. Ahora la familia lleva ese éxito a Taylor, manejando dos cocinas y ganándose la confianza de una nueva comunidad. Después de cuatro años en que los residentes de Taylor manejaban hasta Detroit para probar su comida, la familia Vargas por fin está cocinando en su propio vecindario.

La Jali Expands to Taylor

Continued from page 1

"In Detroit, I was like, 'I will never change my menu to Tex-Mex,'" Pichón says. "When I moved here I was like, 'I need Tex-Mex. There's no way we're going to survive if we don't aim at that market.'"

The well-attended opening drew Taylor Mayor Tim Wooley, who participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony, and representatives from the Mexican Consulate in Detroit, including Consul Roberto Nicolas Vazquez and Cultural Attaché Marlon Lara Porras.

The Vargas family hadn't planned to expand. Owner and patriarch José Manuel Vargas bought what his daughter Leslie calls "a sad little market" in Southwest around 2016, after spending a year in the States telling everyone he was done with business. He had run markets in Mexico for 27 years, establishing himself in Mexico City before extortion pushed him out toward his roots in San Ignacio, Jalisco.

The Detroit restaurant needed complete overhaul. José Manuel knew how to turn around failing businesses, his wife Tere could cook, and Pichón had just finished culinary school at Schoolcraft College, where he learned French techniques from master chefs. The family rebuilt the menu, the operations, and the whole business.

Taylor Mayor Tim Wooley (center) poses with Vargas Family Members (L to R): Leslie, Pichón, Jose Manuel, Nicolas, Juan, and Tere Lopez.

"We kind of complement each other really well," Leslie says. She's 23, finishing her bachelor's in Human Resources at Wayne State University while managing operations. "But it's hard. The business aspect of running a family business is tough."

Four years in, they had something real. Juan, 20, was handling social media and running the market in Southwest Detroit, sourcing Mexican candies and breads people couldn't find anywhere else. People came in and cried seeing products they hadn't seen in 18 years.

Then the previous owner of Pancho's on Telegraph Road called José Manuel. He was ready to retire and had a building for sale, which was five minutes from José Manuel's house and already set up as a Mexican restaurant. They bought it in late 2023 and spent a year and a half on permits, construction, equipment, and staff. They signed the papers and started tearing walls down before Taylor Police Department announced full cooperation with Border Patrol in May.

"When that announcement came out, we were already deep in this process," Leslie says. It was too late to back out, and they'd invested too much. "As a business, you have to learn, adapt, and overcome those challenges."

Chef Pichón grew up working every station in his family's businesses. Right after high school he enrolled at Schoolcraft, where they've got five Certified Master Chefs on staff. He was 18 and trying to train line cooks twice his age. "That's serious," he says. "I needed to learn more."

The menu at La Jali pulls from Mexico City, Jalisco, and Puebla. "Traditional and adventurous" is how Pichon describes his cuisine. "There are dishes where I like to adventure… give them a twist."

The family lives in Taylor, but they never really grew up there because they spent all their time at the Detroit restaurant. "You can know an area, but not be part of it," Leslie says. "That's something you have to slowly build."

Detroit customers ordered sopes without asking what they were. Taylor customers wanted enchiladas. Some people recognize La Jalisciense from their reputation in Southwest while others stumble in off Telegraph Road and realize halfway through their meal they're eating something they couldn't get anywhere else nearby.

Juan Vargas sees the mercado side in Southwest operating differently than the restaurant. Since the Border Patrol cooperation announcement and federal enforcement ramped up, people stopped coming out. "We survived COVID only because we were a grocery store, a first-need business," Juan says. "But now people aren't even going out for basic needs, and that's scary."

Kids come in to buy things their parents used to get. "You ask, 'Where's your dad?' and they say, 'He's home. He hasn't left in three months.'"

Pichón splits time between locations while training Taylor cooks and keeping the Southwest location running. Leslie manages both as operations manager while finishing college. Even 11-year-old Nico contributes however he can. During the years it's taken to open the restaurant, Nico says, "We used all our force for everything here, and now it's paying off, so it feels nice."

José Manuel has opened and turned around multiple businesses across three decades, two countries, and five cities. He knows the math: restaurant margins are thin, and doubling locations doubles overhead without guaranteeing doubled revenue. "It's very hard work, honest work, but it demands total dedication," he says.

"We never thought La Jalisciense in Detroit would become what it is now," Leslie says. Now the family is bringing that success home to Taylor, running two kitchens and earning a new community's trust. After four years of Taylor residents driving to Detroit for their food, the Vargas family is finally cooking in their own backyard.

Michael D. Gutierrez is the Digital Content Manager for EL CENTRAL Hispanic News. He is a screenwriter and filmmaker with a decade of experience in the television and film industry, contributing to projects including THE HOLDOVERS and LETHAL WEAPON on Fox. He is an active member of the Writers Guild of America-West and its Latino Writers Committee.

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Detroit Festival Connects Mexican Folkloric Dance Communities Across the Midwest

Story and photos by Alejandro Ugalde Sandoval

In its second year, Pasos Midwest gathered Mexican folkloric dance groups from across the Midwest at Wayne State University for a three-day event featuring workshops, performances, and professional evaluations. The event is organized and hosted by Ballet Folclórico of Wayne State University. Groups traveled from as far as Georgia, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, with some driving over 11 hours, to participate in the festival.

The event tackles a major challenge facing groups in the region: being geographically isolated from both Mexico and each other. Mexican folkloric dance, or baile folclórico, preserves region-specific traditions through choreographed performances. Since each of Mexico's states has its own distinct styles, costumes, and meanings, accessing authentic instruction in the United States can be difficult.

Dancers from the Indy Folklore Academy stage a piece representing the Sinaloa Region.

"Groups have been around for 20, 22 years in this area, but nothing like this has ever been done," says Adriana Cecilia Vázquez Ortiz, director of Ballet Folclórico Xochihua from Columbus, Ohio.

Maestra Adriana Cecilia Vázquez Ortiz from Ballet Folclórico Xochihua leads a choreography.

The festival follows a three-day model. The first two days feature intensive workshops with maestros (master instructors). These sessions teach technique and cultural context, covering the history behind each step, the meaning of costume choices, and the regional significance of movements.

On the third day, groups receive professional adjudication, a structured evaluation process where expert judges assess performances. Unlike traditional competitions, Pasos Midwest does not award first, second, or third place rankings. Instead, every participating group receives detailed evaluations in seven categories: technique, projection, choreography, rhythm, costume accuracy, step execution, and general impression. Groups receive division rankings similar to grades, along with written feedback for improvement.

"These allow us to self-evaluate and know how we're doing," says Maestro Roberto Martínez Rocha, director of Ballet Folclórico de la Universidad de Guanajuato.

"It's a way to grow and improve positively."

Maestro Roberto Martínez Rocha, Director del Ballet Folclórico de la Universidad de Guanajuato.

The festival also addresses a financial challenge. "When you do folklore, you almost never get paid in the United States, and that's a barrier," says founder Verónica Beltrán. "If students need to make money, they won't dance folklore, right?"

What started as a conversation about raising scholarship funds has evolved into Pasos Midwest. The goal is to create a multi-year fund supporting high school, university, and post-graduate students.

Pasos Midwest returns in 2026. Information about more events by Ballet Folklórico de Wayne State University is available at bfwaynestate.weebly.com. "I know it will take a few years to create a big endowment, but that's the goal," Beltrán says.

Dancers from Ballet Folclórico Colibrí, who traveled 11 hours from Georgia, pose with a certificate after adjudication on the stage at the Pasos Midwest Festival at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, on Sunday November 9, 2025.

Alejandro Ugalde Sandoval is a Detroit-based independent photographer whose work is rooted in his experience as a Mexican immigrant. He approaches every story with deep respect for the cultures and people he documents. Most days you'll find him chasing perfect light in busy kitchens, capturing neighborhood events, or creating space for genuine moments during portrait sessions.
Through his lens, Alejandro works to bridge information gaps and spark more inclusive conversations within and about Southeast Michigan.

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Members of the Ballet Folclórico of Wayne State University, who organized and coordinated the event.

De la oficina del Tesorero del Condado de Wayne,
Eric R. Sabree

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Why Every Detroit Rapper Wants Diego Cruz Behind the Camera

A three-part profile of Detroit filmmaker Diego Cruz and the work that made his name impossible to ignore

By Michael D. Gutierrez

July 9. My phone lights up. It's one of Detroit's most prolific music video directors, who I had met a month prior, asking if Donut Villa, my brother's shop, is available for a couple hours. Diego Cruz, the talent behind the music videos of some of Detroit's biggest rappers, needs to shoot something for a local artist inspired by that diner scene from Paid in Full, the one between Regina Hall and Wood Harris. It's no problem with me – I had been a direct recipient of Cruz's generosity just weeks prior on a short film I had filmed – and in just a few calls, the location's secured.

Focused behind the lens, Cruz steadies his frame and captures a shot as model Anisah Milton looks on during a take of Samuel Shabazz's "Go Baby" music video. Photo by Michael D. Gutierrez.

The next day, Cruz and his crew arrive. Eighty-five degrees. No clouds. Just heat and light bouncing off concrete. Today's talent is Samuel Shabazz performing his song "Go Baby" from his album Heat Check 2. His manager, the same guy who reps Babyface Ray, tells me Cruz isn't their only go-to director, but he's the one they call when they need it done right and done fast. Frequent collaborator Sabrina Araj is there too, Cruz's go-to for almost everything, be it the assistant director, production manager, or behind the scenes photographer. She and Cruz clash sometimes, but it's the kind of friction that sharpens the work. The rest of the crew filters in – some faces I recognize, some I don't – but the energy's unmistakable. It's the vibe of a set where people actually care about what they're making.

The shoot runs like controlled chaos, but Cruz never loses the thread. Between takes, he breaks down his process for me. Why this angle, what he's building toward. Then he looks up. "You should come to the next location. Abandoned warehouse over by Eastern Market."

This is how Cruz has operated for the past decade, becoming one of Detroit's most recognized and sought after music video directors. He's shot for Icewear Vezzo, Tee Grizzley, Big Sean, Kevin Gates, Tyga, Gunna (the list goes on) and built his reputation turning around projects in days when other directors needed weeks. He brought cinematic narrative to a genre built on performance shots and flashy visuals, pulling together full productions through a few phone calls and Instagram messages. That speed and hustle is what got him recognized. Now he's aiming for something bigger.

When I first met Diego Cruz, 38, at La Jalisciense earlier this summer, construction noise fills the restaurant. A jackhammer tears into brick outside. It's the kind of noise that makes conversation feel like a shouting match. Cruz sits there in a Black Aztlan T-shirt and thick square glasses, unbothered. I ask if we should go somewhere quieter, hoping he'll say yes. He shrugs and smiles. "I used to work in construction. I'm used to it."

His adaptability is an admirable trait, one that I envy, and it defines how Cruz has operated since committing himself full-time to directing music videos. "Detroit is such a run and gun city," he says. "We make it happen any way we can. That's just a part of our culture."

He believes Detroit music video directors can go "toe-to-toe with the best filmmakers from any other city." Watching how he operates – from his resourcefulness to the undeniable final product – it's hard to argue.

Cruz, 38, comes from a tight Southwest Detroit household, one of nine kids who spent their Sundays at MJR Southgate. He spent years in construction, pouring concrete for his father's company, before ever picking up a camera. Now he shoots everything from underground artists counting every dollar to major label budgets. What separates him isn't pedigree or connections, but the way he makes every artist look like they've already blown up.

Sundays at the Movies

Cruz grew up in a packed Detroit house where Sundays meant the movies. His father couldn't afford nine tickets, so he'd buy a few, wave them through, and the family would disappear into the dark for hours. One film turned into two. Sometimes they stayed past sunset. "He wasn't being cheap," Cruz says. "He just wanted us to have that experience."

Those days built his eye. 1998's Belly starring Nas and DMX burned itself into his brain. He remembers watching Shawshank Redemption and Ghost. They were films that taught him about what a person could do with a camera, and they made Detroit feel closer to the screen.

When he's shooting now, setting up a diner scene like Paid in Full, he thinks of that ritual. "One day I want my family in the theater watching one of my films," he says.

His father's drive stayed with him. He ran Cruz Cement and gave people from Mexico a place to land, like so many business owners in Southwest who offer work as a form of care. Cruz picked that up, too. The instinct to share resources, to call and say, "whatever you need, I got you," extended even to me, after just one hour of our first interview. And he's not all talk. The man delivers.

Starting from Scratch

Sometime around 2011, Cruz bought his first real camera (a Canon T3i) after selling back an $800 handycam to Amazon and saving up another week or two of construction paychecks. His ex-wife supported the purchase, even putting equipment on her credit card when he couldn't fully afford upgrades. She knew Matthew Castro, Cruz's friend who appears in his early videos posted exclusively to Facebook—they were friends before Cruz and Castro even went to school together. "She got what we were doing, just having fun with it," Cruz says.

Those first videos with Castro were nothing fancy, just two friends lip-syncing to Beyoncé. They were learning angles and composition not from a textbook or a professor, but by actually doing it. "We were just messing around, but it made me realize this camera was more than a tool. I could actually use it to have fun and create something. I bought it for a dream, but why can't the dream be fun?"

By 2013, Cruz was ready to try something bigger. He shot a 38-minute short film, pulling together friends, family, and any anyone else from the neighborhood who wanted to help. His ex-wife did makeup. His friend Riyadh helped promote it. Manny, another friend, helped shoot. His older brother starred in it, and his younger brothers filled out the cast. It premiered at Royal Oak Main Art Theatre, a screening that pulled everyone in from friends to family, but, too nervous to stay, Cruz paced outside while the 38-minute film played. He knows now what he didn't then, mainly that the short ran long and lost its thread, but that's how it works. You make something bad before you make something good.

"I could've easily quit right there. Thought, 'People think it sucks, whatever.' But no one actually told me it sucks. And they still came out and supported it."

Someone told him afterward, "Nobody from here is doing

Amid haze and graffiti, Cruz directs model Anisah Milton during a take of Samuel Shabazz's "Go Baby" music video at the abandoned Detroit Water and Sewage plant on the corner of Erskine and Orleans near Eastern Market. Photo by Michael D. Gutierrez.

this.” That validation, whether directly stated or not, pushed him forward. “I was like, who cares what anyone thinks? If it sucks, it sucks. If they think it’s amazing, great. But either way, I’m gonna keep making stuff.”

The decision to keep creating despite anyone’s opinion would define everything that came next. In 2014, Cruz started hustling for paid work while still working construction during the day at his dad’s company. He’d reach out to artists he thought were cool, be them rappers, singers, really anyone who was making music, and offer to shoot videos. “If you hate it, don’t put it out,” he’d say. “If you like it, cool.”

He did a lot for underground artists like Name Tag and Ty, and he learned on sets with his friend Arturo, whatever would build skill and speed. “2014 was mostly unpaid stuff,” he says. “I probably made like 500 bucks total, and I shot maybe 10 to 20 videos that year. The next year, I told myself, ‘If I did 10 this year, I want to double that—and actually get paid.’”

Meanwhile, he was still breaking his body working 40-hour weeks pouring concrete. Still figuring out what to charge artists who were just as independent as he was. Still learning how to light a scene, how to scout a location, how to turn around a finished product fast enough that artists would keep coming back.

Seeing in Light and Shadow

Cruz arrives at the abandoned Detroit Water and Sewage plant on the corner of Erskine and Orleans near Eastern Market before Shabazz and his crew to film the last scene of the “Go Baby” music video. He scopes the area to finalize shots within the plant, and I follow him as he moves through cavernous rooms that haven’t seen legitimate use in years, noticing him read the space the way a cinematographer reads a script. Then he stops.

Light falls through a crack in the ceiling, one clean stroke across the dark. Dust drifts through it, slow and silver. For a moment, the room feels like it’s waiting to be filmed. “That’s the money shot right there,” Cruz says.

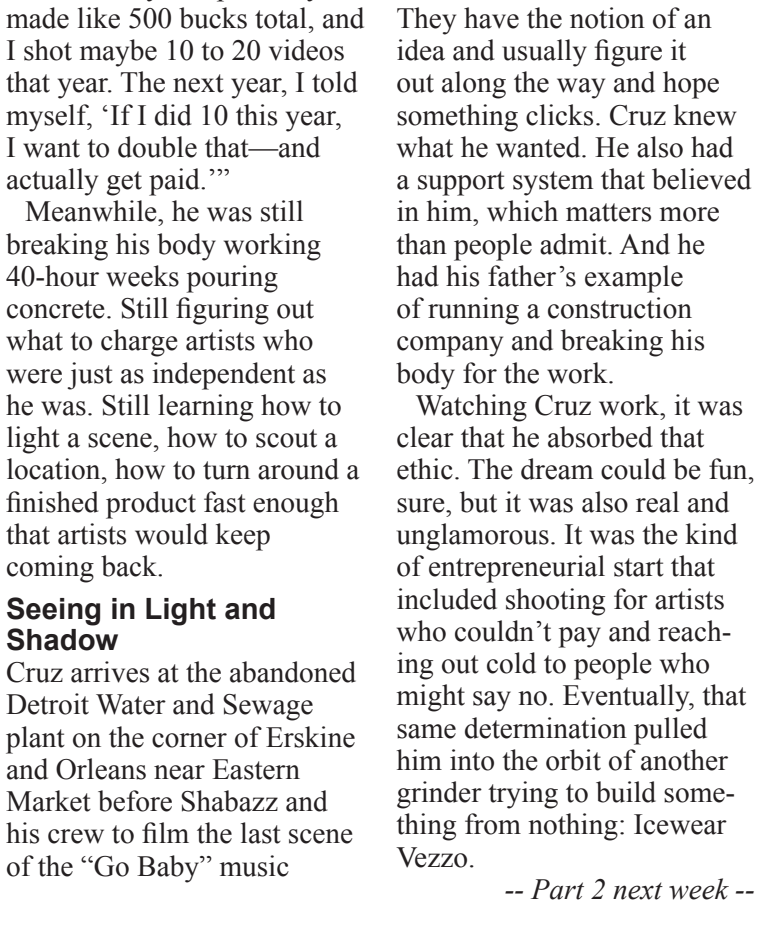
It’s both craft and instinct, something that Cruz learned by doing it wrong a hundred times first, spanning back to when he shot those early Beyoncé lip-sync videos with Castro, all the way to making that too-long short film in 2013, and then by taking every opportunity to put his hands on a camera.

Most people starting out don’t have a clear vision. They have the notion of an idea and usually figure it out along the way and hope something clicks. Cruz knew what he wanted. He also had a support system that believed in him, which matters more than people admit. And he had his father’s example of running a construction company and breaking his body for the work.

Watching Cruz work, it was clear that he absorbed that ethic. The dream could be fun, sure, but it was also real and unglamorous. It was the kind of entrepreneurial start that included shooting for artists who couldn’t pay and reaching out cold to people who might say no. Eventually, that same determination pulled him into the orbit of another grinder trying to build something from nothing: Icewear Vezzo.

-- Part 2 next week --

Cruz sets up a shot across the street from Donut Villa on West Vernor while fielding a call between takes of the “Go Baby” music video shoot. Photo by Michael D. Gutierrez.



Diego Cruz shares a moment with Big Sean outside a film studio in Los Angeles during the “It Is What It Is” music video shoot, ft. Gunna. Photo by Juan Cruz, Courtesy of Diego Cruz.

Detroit Artist Samuel Shabazz during the filming of his music video for his song “Go Baby,” directed by Diego Cruz. Photo by Michael D. Gutierrez.

Michael D. Gutierrez is the Digital Content Manager for EL CENTRAL Hispanic News. He is a screenwriter and filmmaker with a decade of experience in the television and film industry, contributing to projects including THE HOLDOVERS and LETHAL WEAPON on Fox. He is an active member of the Writers Guild of America-West and its Latino Writers Committee.

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EL CENTRAL
HISPANIC NEWS
SPORTS

Sports Editor: Dan Graschuck/ EL CENTRAL

Glory to the Brave

Photos by Adam J. Dewey

Last Saturday, TSI boxing presented, Glory to the Brave, a 12 bout boxing event (under the rules of the USA Boxing Association), before a sell out crowd at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Warren, MI.

Funds from the event, went to support the war in the Ukrain.

Photos below are highlights from Glory to the Brave boxing event

TSI Ukrainian Boxing Team, host for Glory to the Brave boxing event last Saturday, at the Ukrainian Culture Center in Warren, MI

Ring card hosts for the Glory to the Brave boxing event last Saturday

Vitalii Konstantynov (on left, from TSI Boxing team) defeated Brandon Wilcox (on right, from PunchTown Boxing Club) by unanimous decision

Kemaree Dozier (on left, from Gold's Gym) defeated James Harold (on right, from Primeboxing Club) by unanimous decision

Upcoming Salita Promotions Boxing Event at the Fox Theatre, December 20th

DCFC Ends Season In Shootout Loss

EL CENTRAL HISPANIC NEWS
Pateando la No. 5
SPORTS

David Levine
EL CENTRAL

After pulling off the biggest playoff upset in the USL Championship's short history, Detroit City's luck ran out in Pittsburgh last Saturday. The two rivals played out a tense goalless draw and had to be separated by penalty kicks. Detroit City hit the woodwork twice in the shootout, but goalkeeper Carlos Saldana could only save one of the Riverhounds' shots. That ended a short, but unlikely playoff run that had started with a shocking 1-0 win in Louisville the week before.

Going into Highmark Stadium didn't strike fear into either the players or the dozens of supporters who make the five hour drive to the Steel City. Having won a playoff game there two years ago, spirits were high among those who made the trip. Highmark has been crammed into a small piece of land on the shores of the Monangahela River. There is only a rail line between the stadium and the river. From the main stand, fans can see the Pittsburgh skyline and the much larger stadiums belonging to the NFL Steelers and Major League Baseball Pirates.

The Riverhounds came into this game looking to avenge their shocking playoff loss to DCFC two years ago. A late Dominic Gasso goal gave Le Rouge an upset win of only slightly less cataclysmic proportions to the one they scored over Louisville this year. With both teams equally determined, it meant a lot of physical play and a lot of fouls for referee Natalie Simon. Perhaps the league wanted a more experienced referee to handle two teams with some history. Simon, a FIFA ranked official, had to whistle 34 total fouls over the 120 minutes and probably let a few go so that the game could have some rhythm.

While the game flowed, chances to score didn't. Neither team created many opportunities. Pittsburgh managed to get 3 of their 18 shots on target, while DCFC could only muster 2 shots on goal out of 5 attempts. That's not to say the goalkeepers didn't have to save their teams in crucial moments.

Carlos Saldana stepped into the starting role when Carlos Herrera suffered a hamstring injury at the end of the regular season. He made the save of the season against Louisville, robbing Brian Ownby with a spectacular dive. He came up big again in Pittsburgh, making his first save diving to his right to stop a low shot from Bradley Sample in just the second minute. He was called upon later to stop Beto Ydrach at full stretch ten minutes from time.

DCFC offered little in attack. They conceded the bulk of possession to the hosts and simply looked for set pieces. They rarely bothered to push forward. As result, Riverhounds goalkeeper Eric Dick had a quiet first 90 minutes. Only well into extra time did Le Rouge force him into action. DCFC clearly looked like they were happy to go to penalty kicks. However, six minutes into extra time came their one chance to win the game. Stephen Carroll, restricted to the role of a substitute since returning from a knee injury, played the type of killer through ball that the team has missed since the early weeks of the season. Jordan Adebayo-Smith, the on loan forward from Minnesota United, sliced through the Pittsburgh backline, beat the goalkeeper to the ball and tried to loft it over him. Unfortunately, Eric Dick is 6'5" and the ball hit him in the face as his spread himself across the top of the penalty area. That was it. That was DCFC's only serious attempt on goal.

They held on grimly until the shootout. After Saldana had saved Pittsburgh's second kick, DCFC had a chance to take a commanding lead, but Devon Amoo-Mensah fired his shot off the goal post. When DCFC needed a conversion to level the score in the next round, Ryan Williams struck the crossbar. Saldana couldn't save any more and DCFC's season finished as much of had gone since the beginning of May, without a goal.

Detroit City will now have some major decisions to make. First, having parted ways with Sporting Director Trevor James under mysterious circumstances, they will have to make a new hire for a most important position. Then, whoever that person is will be the main decider over the future of head coach Danny Dichio. His contract is coming to an end. Given the team regressed from the third spot in the Eastern Conference to the eighth place, the club will have to look at what caused the drop off. The team started out winning five of seven games, but then went into the tank winning only four of the last twenty-three. There was also an embarrassing loss to League One Portland Hearts of Pine in the Jagermeister League Cup.

Injuries certainly played a major role in DCFC's season. Ben Morris, Abdoulaye Diop, Rhys Williams, Connor Rutz, Marcello Polisi, Dominic Gasso, and Stephen Carroll missed huge chunks of the season. Their absences forced the club to find players like Isaiah LeFlore on loan to fill out the roster. Missing as many as four starters at any one time would handicap even the best teams. The injuries also brought attention to a lack of depth. The remaining fit players just couldn't find a way to win many games. They finished with 10 draws, among the most in the league. Those dropped points cost them in the table, meaning they had to rely on Indy XI to lose their final game just to slip into the playoffs.

Upper management has also been heavily involved in moving the new stadium forward. AlumniFi Field is supposed to open in 2027, but the club has yet to begin demolishing the old hospital that sits on the land in Southwest Detroit where the club will make its permanent home. They are still awaiting the final approvals from the Detroit City Council. This means at least one more season at Keyworth. For now, the team and its supporters can reflect on an underwhelming, injury-filled regular season followed by a shocking playoff upset and a disappointing finish.

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EDITORIAL OPINION

Guest Opinion:

Musk and Mamdani: The End of Harsh Capitalism?
In opposite ways, Musk and Mamdani pose the same question

By Robert Reich

Last week, two things happened that may shed some light on where American capitalism is heading.

First, Tesla's board caved in to Elon Musk's demand that he get a pay package of $1 trillion (if he meets various goals).

Musk's trillion-dollar pay package is so grotesque as to make a mockery of the most ardent free-market capitalists. Although his board is stuffed with cronies and relatives, he still had to hold it hostage to get his trillion — threatening that if he didn't, his attention would wander elsewhere. Other Tesla shareholders got shafted.

Second, the voters of New York City — the capital of world capitalism — elected as their mayor a Democratic Socialist who thinks billionaires shouldn't exist.

New York's oligarchs spent more than $55 million trying to defeat Mamdani and get Andrew Cuomo elected instead. With Cuomo winning just under 855,000 votes, that came to about $65 per vote. Total spending for Mamdani was about $16 million. With Mamdani winning more than 1 million votes, that came to about $15 per vote.

One can't draw vast conclusions from all this, but Musk's bizarre pay package and Mamdani's unlikely win together suggest that the unique form of harsh capitalism now practiced in America may be coming to an end.

No other advanced capitalist nation subjects its working families to as much fear and uncertainty over jobs, wages, health, and retirement as does America. None tolerates nearly the same inequalities of income and wealth (although some are moving in our direction). Musk's pay and Mamdani's victory are exhibits A and B.

Harsh American capitalism has become unsustainable, politically and economically.

Unsustainable politically

The bottom 80 percent, whose paychecks haven't kept up with inflation, have grown increasingly angry. That anger has infused both political parties with fierce antiestablishment populism and fostered deep distrust in all political institutions.

In 2016, much of the voting public went with Bernie Sanders or Donald Trump — two outsiders who at the time were neither Democrat nor Republican but who told voters what they already suspected: that the system was rigged against them. Both candidates promised fundamental change.

Unfortunately for America and the world, the corporate and Wall Street wing of the Democratic Party put an end to Sanders's candidacy — leaving Trump to talk about the rigged market and convince voters he was on their side. In reality, he was and has remained on the side of the billionaires.

Antiestablishment populism continues to be the most powerful political force in America, within both parties.

Last Tuesday, Democratic populists prevailed. Even the so-called "moderate" Democrats who won the governorships of Virginia and New Jersey targeted utilities, AI data centers that demand huge amounts of electricity, big corporations that collude to keep rents high, and pharmaceutical middlemen that have been driving up drug prices — all populist targets.

Unsustainable economically

When so much of the nation's income and wealth moves to the top, the rest of the public doesn't have enough purchasing power to keep the economy going.

The richest 10 percent now account for half of all spending in the United States (up from a third three decades ago). And much of that spending is based on their stock market holdings, whose value has been soaring.

But it's a house of cards. The stock market is now dependent on a handful of highly speculative stocks — centering on AI, big tech, and crypto — that could burst at any time, bringing down both the stock market and the confidence of many who are now keeping the economy going.

Trump's unpredictable tariffs and his tax breaks and tax loopholes for the rich have added to the fragility — causing employers to hold back from making major investments due to uncertainty and forcing consumers to struggle with rising prices for food, energy, clothing, and other necessities.

What does this mean?

Musk's success in getting a trillion-dollar pay package, coupled with the failure of corporate and Wall Street titans to prevent Mamdani from becoming the next mayor of the capital of global capitalism, don't signal a sudden end to America's system of harsh capitalism.

Rather, the two events are signposts to where that system is likely heading — not toward a socialist revolution but to a softer form of capitalism, more in line with advanced capitalism elsewhere around the world.

In the 1930s, Franklin D. Roosevelt saved capitalism from its excesses. His social insurance, public investments, and high taxes on the wealthy paved the way for the largest middle class the world had ever seen, in the first three decades after World War II.

But America got off that road in the 1980s and has been veering farther away from it since then. In opposite ways, both Musk and Mamdani pose the same question: Are we ready to get back on?

Opinions in this column are not necessarily those of the Publisher or Editor

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Opinión de un Invitado:

Musk y Mamdani: ¿El fin del capitalismo salvaje?
Desde perspectivas opuestas, Musk y Mamdani plantean la misma pregunta

Por Robert Reich

La semana pasada ocurrieron dos hechos que podrían arrojar luz sobre el rumbo del capitalismo estadounidense.

Primero, la junta directiva de Tesla cedió ante la exigencia de Elon Musk de recibir un paquete salarial de un billón de dólares (si cumple con ciertos objetivos).

El paquete salarial de un billón de dólares de Musk es tan desmesurado que ridiculiza incluso a los más fervientes defensores del libre mercado. Aunque su junta está repleta de allegados y familiares, aun así tuvo que tomarla como rehén para conseguir su billón, amenazando con que, de no hacerlo, su atención se desviaría a otra parte. Otros accionistas de Tesla salieron perjudicados.

Segundo, los votantes de la ciudad de Nueva York, la capital del capitalismo mundial, eligieron como alcalde a un socialista demócrata que cree que los multimillonarios no deberían existir.

Los oligarcas neoyorquinos gastaron más de 55 millones de dólares intentando derrotar a Mamdani y lograr la elección de Andrew Cuomo. Dado que Cuomo obtuvo poco menos de 855.000 votos, esto equivale a unos 65 dólares por voto. El gasto total de Mamdani fue de aproximadamente 16 millones de dólares. Dado que Mamdani obtuvo más de un millón de votos, esto equivale a unos 15 dólares por voto.

No se pueden extraer conclusiones definitivas de todo esto, pero el peculiar paquete salarial de Musk y la inesperada victoria de Mamdani sugieren que la singular forma de capitalismo despiadado que se practica actualmente en Estados Unidos podría estar llegando a su fin.

Ninguna otra nación capitalista avanzada somete a sus familias trabajadoras a tanta incertidumbre y temor respecto al empleo, los salarios, la salud y la jubilación como Estados Unidos. Ninguna tolera desigualdades de ingresos y riqueza tan marcadas (aunque algunas se están acercando). El salario de Musk y la victoria de Mamdani son ejemplos claros de ello.

El capitalismo estadounidense despiadado se ha vuelto insostenible, tanto política como económicamente.

Insostenible políticamente:

El 80% más pobre de la población, cuyos salarios no han seguido el ritmo de la inflación, está cada vez más indignado. Esta indignación ha infundido a ambos partidos políticos un feroz populismo antisistema y ha fomentado una profunda desconfianza en todas las instituciones políticas.

En 2016, gran parte del electorado se decantó por Bernie Sanders o Donald Trump, dos candidatos ajenos al sistema que, en aquel momento, no eran ni demócratas ni republicanos, pero que les hicieron saber a los votantes lo que ya sospechaban: que el sistema estaba amañado en su contra. Ambos candidatos prometieron un cambio radical.

Desafortunadamente para Estados Unidos y el mundo, el ala corporativa y de Wall Street del Partido Demócrata puso fin a la candidatura de Sanders, dejando a Trump la tarea de hablar sobre el mercado manipulado y convencer a los votantes de que estaba de su lado. En realidad, estaba y sigue estando del lado de los multimillonarios.

El populismo antisistema continúa siendo la fuerza política más poderosa en Estados Unidos, dentro de ambos partidos.

El martes pasado, los populistas demócratas se impusieron. Incluso los llamados demócratas "moderados" que ganaron las gobernaciones de Virginia y Nueva Jersey arremetieron contra las empresas de servicios públicos, los centros de datos de inteligencia artificial que consumen enormes cantidades de electricidad, las grandes corporaciones que se confabulan para mantener los alquileres altos y los intermediarios farmacéuticos que han estado disparando los precios de los medicamentos: todos ellos objetivos del populismo.

Insostenible económicamente

Cuando gran parte de los ingresos y la riqueza del país se concentra en la cima, el resto de la población carece del poder adquisitivo suficiente para sostener la economía.

El 10% más rico ahora controla la mitad del gasto total en Estados Unidos (frente a un tercio hace tres décadas). Y gran parte de ese gasto se basa en sus inversiones en bolsa, cuyo valor se ha disparado.

Pero es un castillo de naipes. El mercado bursátil depende ahora de un puñado de acciones altamente especulativas —centradas en la IA, las grandes tecnológicas y las criptomonedas— que podrían desplomarse en cualquier momento, provocando el derrumbe tanto del mercado como de la confianza de muchos que actualmente mantienen la economía a flote.

Los aranceles impredecibles de Trump y sus exenciones y lagunas fiscales para los ricos han agravado la fragilidad, provocando que los empresarios retengan las grandes inversiones debido a la incertidumbre y obligando a los consumidores a lidiar con el aumento de los precios de los alimentos, la energía, la ropa y otros productos de primera necesidad.

¿Qué significa esto?

El éxito de Musk al conseguir un paquete salarial de un billón de dólares, sumado al fracaso de los titanes corporativos y de Wall Street para impedir que Mamdani se convirtiera en el próximo alcalde de la capital del capitalismo global, no presagian el fin repentino del sistema estadounidense de capitalismo despiadado.

Más bien, ambos acontecimientos señalan hacia dónde se dirige probablemente ese sistema: no hacia una revolución socialista, sino hacia una forma de capitalismo más moderada, más acorde con el capitalismo avanzado de otras partes del mundo.

En la década de 1930, Franklin D. Roosevelt salvó al capitalismo de sus excesos. Su sistema de seguridad social, las inversiones públicas y los altos impuestos a los ricos allanaron el camino para la mayor clase media que el mundo había visto hasta entonces, en las tres primeras décadas posteriores a la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

Pero Estados Unidos se desvió de ese camino en la década de 1980 y desde entonces se ha alejado cada vez más. De maneras opuestas, tanto Musk como Mamdani plantean la misma pregunta: ¿Estamos listos para retomar el rumbo?

Las opiniones expresadas en esta columna no son necesariamente las del editor o redactor

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SPECIAL WORLD'S CULTURES

Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

Cartagena de Indias

Cartagena de Indias, located in the Viceroyalty of Granada, in present-day Colombia, was the first province to declare its independence from Spain after the battle that began on November 11, 1811, and lasted 10 years.

Cartagena was a strategic location, as much of the transatlantic trade to the Southern Cone depended on it, due to the location of its port. The trade routes that left Europe and came to the American continent included the African islands under Spanish and Portuguese rule, such as the Canary Islands and Cape Verde, primarily, before continuing on to the Antillean islands of the Caribbean Sea and arriving at the continental port of Cartagena, which had the great advantage of the Magdalena River, facilitating the entry of ships into the interior of the continent.

Cartagena, being an important port, also became a point of cultural exchange between the three continents, which to this day distinguishes it for its richness, as its Afro-descendant heritage left a notable imprint on the identity of Cartagena with its musical rhythms and body movements that are now part of the cultural expression of the region. Cartagena de Indias, besides being the most important port in Colombia and the capital of the department (state, province) of Bolívar, boasts not only the capital region itself, but also several idyllic beaches surrounding the port: Playa Blanca, the beaches of Isla Grande, the beaches of Isla Múcura, the beaches of the Barú Peninsula, and the beaches of the Rosario Islands. The latter are a type of islet located off the coast.

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ESPECIAL CULTURAS DEL MUNDO,

by Mariana Ayón RV

Music: Bullerengue

Bullerengue is music and dance from the Colombian Caribbean region, currently associated with cultural resistance. It was primarily performed by the descendants of the Maroons (cimarrons) who inhabited the palenques (maroon settlements) of the Canal del Dique area, the Lower Magdalena (Colombia), the Palenque of Mamoní or Santiago del Príncipe, and the Mandinga tribe of Kuna Yala (Panama), extending as far as the Darién region. The songs, dances, and rounds are organized in a circular fashion, with the lead vocals being those of the woman, the highest-ranking dignitary in this sung dance.

Bullerengue is characterized as a sung dance, seemingly derived from the ritual customs of the Palenque of San Basilio, forming part of the initiation rites for young women into puberty, especially in Cartagena de Indias.

Bullerengue emerged as a cultural product of enslaved Africans who used female drums, or alegre drums, and male drums, or llamador drums. The women also wore their polleronas, or skirts. Through this musical revelry of drums and handclaps, they celebrated their freedom upon leaving their lives of slavery.

The music includes a female drum, or alegre drum, accompanied by a male drum, or llamador drum, which keeps the rhythm. It also includes a totuma (a gourd) with a broken ceramic plate inside, and the handclaps of the chorus accompanying the music. Vocally, bullerengue is led by a master of ceremonies, and the singing is based on the narration of a story through question and answer in décimas (ten-line stanzas) and fragmented lines.

If I were a drum,
my black woman,
I would play only for you;
For you, my black woman, for you.

If I were a maraca,
I would play only for you,
for you, maraca and drum;

For you, my darling, for you.

I wish I could become a bagpipe
and it would play only for you,
just for you, all by myself, for you;
for you, my darling, for you.

And if I were a drum
I would hum softly,
very softly,
so that I could dance for you.

For me, my darling, for me,
for me, only for me.

ESPECIAL CULTURAS DEL MUNDO

Cartagena de Indias, Colombia

Cartagena de Indias

Cartagena de Indias, ubicada en el virreinato de Granada, actual Colombia, fue la primera provincia en declararse independiente de España tras la batalla que inició el 11 de noviembre de 1811 y que duró 10 años.

Cartagena era un lugar estratégico, pues gran parte del comercio transatlántico al Cono Sur dependía de ella, por la ubicación de su puerto. Las rutas comerciales que salían de Europa y venían hacia el continente americano incluían las islas africanas bajo el dominio español y portugués como las Islas Canarias y Cabo Verde, principalmente, para pasar a las islas antillanas del mar Caribe y arribar al puerto continental de Cartagena, que tenía a su gran ventaja el río Magdalena facilitando el ingreso de los barcos hasta el interior continental.

Cartagena, siendo un puerto importante, se volvió también un punto de intercambio cultural entre los tres continentes, lo que hasta la fecha le distingue por su riqueza, pues su herencia afrodescendiente dejo una imprenta notable en la identidad cartaginera con sus ritmos musicales y sus movimientos corporales que ahora son parte de la expresión cultural de la región.

Cartagena de indias aparte de ser el puerto más importante de Colombia, siendo también la capital del departamento (estado, provincia) de Bolívar, cuenta no sólo con la región capital, sino que alrededor del puerto se encuentran diferentes playas paradisíacas: Playa Blanca, Playas de Isla Grande, Playas de Isla Múcura, Playa de la Península de Barú, Playas de Islas del Rosario. Éstas últimas, son un tipo de islotes construidos frente a la playa.

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Música: Bullerengue

Es música y danza de la región Caribe colombiana actualmente asociada a la resistencia cultural. El bullerengue fue ejecutada principalmente por los actuales descendientes de los negros cimarrones que habitaron los palenques del área del Canal del Dique, el Bajo Magdalena (Colombia), el Palenque del Mamoní o Santiago del Príncipe y la tribu de los Mandingas de Kuna Yala (Panamá), que se extendieron hasta el Darién. Donde Los cantos, bailes y rondas, se organizan de manera circular y la voz prima está a cargo de la mujer como la mayor dignataria este baile canta'o.

El bullerengue se caracteriza por ser un baile cantado, al parecer desprendida de las costumbres rituales del Palenque de San Basilio, formando parte de los actos de iniciación de las jóvenes a la pubertad, sobre todo en Cartagena de Indias.

El bullerengue surge como producto cultural de los esclavizados africanos quienes utilizaban tambores hembra o tambor alegre y el tambor macho o llamador, asimismo las mujeres visten sus polleronas o faldones. Por medio de esta bulla musical de tambores y palmas celebraban su libertad cuando dejaban su vida como esclavizados.

La música incluye un tambor hembra o tambor alegre acompañado de un tambor macho o llamador que lleva el ritmo, también una totuma con un plato de loza quebrado en su interior. y las palmas del coro que acompañan la música. A nivel vocal el bullerengue es liderado por un maestro de ceremonia y su canto se basa en la narración de una historia mediante pregunta y respuesta en décimas y líneas fragmentadas.

Si yo fuera tambó
mi negra,
sonara na' má' pá' ti;
Pá' ti, mi negra, pá' tí.

Si maraca fuera yo,
sonara sólo pá' ti,
pá' ti maraca y tambó;
pá' ti, mi negra, pá' ti.

Quisiera voveme gaita
y sonará na' má' pá' ti,
pá' ti, solita, pá' ti;
pá' ti, mi negra, pá' ti.

Y si fuera tamborito
currucutearía bajito,
bajito, pero bien bajito,
pá' que bailara pá' ti.

Pá' mí, mi negra, pá' mí,
pá' mí, na' má' que pá' mí.

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